

JANUARY 1999

Mon 11

Headline - *Mugabe 'foiled officers coup'* - Continue unrest in the Zimbabwe army, (see authors written notes - **Book 3, 1996 - 1998**) has resulted in 23 officers arrested for plotting the overthrow of the government because of its involvement in the civil war in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo. The alleged plot, leaked by the *Harare Standard*, was planned for 16/12 and was supposed to have the backing of a cabinet minister, an MP and senior military officers.

Of the troops committed to preserving the Kabila government - 8,000 - more than 30 officers and men are awaiting court martial for refusing to fight. Many Zimbabwean citizens, 70% according to a Gallop Poll - are against the use of troops in the neighbouring country.

Opponents say that the chief reason that the country is involved is so that the politicians and the 'top brass' in the army can further their business career. An example - the officer commanding the troops, General Z, is also the owner of a transport company that the army is using to transport material between the two countries. - **Andrew Meldrum, GDN Page 12 C1** -

Wed 13

Headline *White farmers to keep land*, Under pressure from foreign aid donors the authorities have agreed to reduce the planned land confiscation from white farmers [*authors note - see Book 2 27/6*], according to a spokesman for the International Monetary Fund. Now the IMF would release £32m [\$53], which had been frozen since 11/98. A spokesman - said that he now believed that the government were "firmly behind" an earlier agreement to nationalise only 118 farms during a two year period.

A prominent journalist, M Chavunduca, has been detained by the military in connection with the report in his newspaper - the *Harare Standard* - over the foiled coup plot (qv 11/1). This government inspired move is an indication of the governments determination to crack down on the growing opposition to the rule of President Mugabe. - **GDN, page 13 C1** -

Tues 19

Headline - *Banans given one year for sex crimes* - following the various happenings involving former Presided C Banana [*authors note - see Zimbabwe Book 2*] the recently returned convicted sodomite has been jailed for 20 years for his crimes, which were originally exposed by a police officer. The sentence was then suspended along with four others if Mr Banana pays a fine of £7,300 [Z\$500,000] to his accuser

Dube. Mr Dube claims his life was ruined by sexual harassment by the former president

In the case of the journalist, held by the military after his story of an alleged coup (qv 11/1) the courts have ruled that his detention was illegal. Mr Chavunduca has now been detained by the civilian police.

The managing director of the *Harare Standard* has indicated that the CID were preparing to charge Mr Chavunduca with publishing a false story. - **GDN P14 C1** -

Thurs 21

Headline - ***Journalists go missing*** - Two journalists disappeared from police cells yesterday, where they were being held for printing a report of a failed army coup. The high court had ordered the release of the editor and a reporter, [Chavendra] from the *Standard* newspaper, but the minister of defence, M Mahachi, has refused to obey the order. - **A Meldrum, GDN page 14 C8** -

Fri 22

Headline - ***Zimbabwe journalists tortured*** - Suffering the effects of alleged torture at the hands of the military, journalists M Chavunduka (qv) - editor of the *Harare Standard* and R Choto who was also detained gave a graphic account of their time held in prison and a chronological breakdown of their detention since 13/1.

It emerged, after the two had been in front of the magistrate, that they are facing charges of “providing false information likely to cause alarm and despondency among the public.” These very same charges were used against alleged terrorists by the country’s Smith government.

There is the possibility of a protest strike over the treatment of the two journalists by the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists , the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and the National Constitutional Assembly. - **A M, GDN page 18 C1** -

Sat 23

The Zimbabwean authorities, pursuing their drive against the non government press, yesterday arrested Clive Wilson , managing director of the *Independent* and the *Harare Standard* newspapers.

The defence minister, Moven Mahachi, denied any torture [qv 22/1] and suggested that the two men had “scratched themselves.” - **A M, GDN page 14 C6 adb** -

Bail has been set, for the two named journalists (qv 22/1) at £155 [Z\$ 10,000]. They are due to appear in court again on 22/2.

Leading Article, **Just Judges - Zimbabwe’s courts take liberty’s side against torturers** - the decision of the two judges, to defy the ever increasing security consciousness of the Mugabe government is to be applauded and also the

perseverance of the publisher, Mr C Wilson, of the newspapers that employed those detained **illegally**.

All charges should be dropped, after the near continual torture the two men had to endure at the hands of the military.

“President Mugabe’s only credible defence is to dismiss his Defence Minister, court martial the soldiers [who carried out the deed] concerned and drop all charges against the *Standard*.” - **The Times, 22.1**

Tues 26

Headline *Mugabe ‘silent on torture’* Zimbabwe’s police yesterday released the managing director of the *Standard* newspaper, Clive Wilson (qv), who had been held for three nights after his newspaper printed a report of a failed army plot to overthrow President Robert Mugabe.

On his release, he urged Mr Mugabe to speak out against torture in light of compelling evidence that his military last week tortured two *Standard* journalists who published the coup story.

“Despite these well documented allegations of torture there is still no word from President Mugabe about this,” said Mr Wilson. “No one knows where he stands. he should make a statement.”

The British government has also called on the Mugabe government to investigate the torture allegations and, if warranted, press charges. - **A M, GDM page 13 C8 -**

Thurs 28

Headline - *Torture reevaluation triggers fight for Zimbabwe’s soul* -following the detentions of Choto and Chavunduka (qv) the issue of human rights has suddenly sprung to the fore, and has taken special significance for the government as there has to be a general election before the end of the millenniums.

So far the practises of the Mugabe government to stifle the free press and of ignoring the populations basic human rights have had there consequences. With these latest abuses - for which the president has made no apology - members of the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists have called on the international community to withhold already agreed aid for the economy

Taking up the cudgel of speaking out for a free and fair society the editor of the *Independent* newspaper, T Nucube, said that the countries small but active independent press would not be intimidated. - **GDN page 15 C 5 -**

February

Mon 1

Headline, *Judge asks Mugabe to denounce torture*, The judges of Zimbabwe's supreme court have challenged the president, Robert Mugabe, to account for the detention and torture of two journalists, by military agents, (qv), the *Standard* reported yesterday.

In a five page letter, they called on Mr Mugabe to make an unequivocal statement against all torture by government agents and to reaffirm the authority of the courts. It said that the treatment of the two *Standard* journalist shad had a negative impact on the rule of law in the country.

“What is of great consequences the public perception that the military and the Central Intelligence Organisation , can operate with impunity breach of the law,” it said - **GDN page 12 C7**

Mon 8

Headline, *Mugabe ‘the black mamba’ bares his fangs*, In a response too the plea made by the judges of the supreme court (qv 1/2) the President went on national television and called for his accusers to resign after he accused them of ‘being agents of Britain ‘ intent on destabilising the army.

“If the judiciary is ignored, anarchy prevails. We ask that Your Excellency makes a public statement” - **Supreme Court judges seeking reassurance that Mugabe is committed to the rule of law.**

“The judiciary has no right whatsoever to give instructions to the president” - **Mugabe’s reply- GDN page 12 C1 -**

Tues 9

Headline, *New Harare press arrests*, Four more journalists were arrested in Zimbabwe yesterday following Mugabe's comments (qv 8/2). I Mandaza the chief editor of the *Mirror*, an independent weekly newspaper, was held by the police when he went to protest at the detention of 3 other journalists - G Kwinjeh, F Goncalvesand F Mungazi who had been held the same day.

All four were held on similar charges to M Chavenduca (qv 22/1) after they wrote a report, in late 1998, about the return of the bodies of Zimbabwe soldiers killed in the Congo war. They are due in court today. - **GDN page 14, C7 abridged -**

Thurs 11

Headline, *Students turn against Mugabe* - Riot police confronted thousands of students as they prepared to march in Harare's city centre. The initial cause of complaint was the late payment of student grants, which the authorities say they will have to wait a further 7 weeks to be paid. As the protest continued it became apparent that the crowd were angry at the country's involvement in the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Leader Comment, **An African despot - Zimbabwe is in peril** - the ironic situation that the government has signed the Commonwealth's statement to uphold human rights, when Zimbabwe was born in 1980, while in 1999 authorities acting on the governments behalf can take civilians off the street, detain them, ignore the rule of law by subjecting them to torture.

The 'politicos' may blame members of the white population who incite racial tension. The real problem is "that Zimbabwe is an increasingly corrupt state whose leader has stupidly involved his countrymen in a deeply unpopular war." - **GDN page 15 C1**

Tues 16

Letter, **P T Musaka, Zimbabwe High Commission, London** - press freedom is ongoing and the media are allowed to comment on all issues, so long as they are "not abusing their position to deliberately destabilise the country". The issue of alleged torture (qv) is "being handled according to the law of the land".

Wed 24

Headline, *Zimbabwe editor seeks British care*, Two Zimbabwean journalists allegedly tortured by the military last month (qv 22/1) want to travel to a specialist medical foundation in Britain for treatment.

A court agreed yesterday to M Chavunduka and Ray Choto of the *Standard* newspaper making the trip but the state has appealed. - **GDN page 16 C8** -

MARCH

Mon 8

Headline, *Torture pair on way to UK* Two Zimbabwean journalists are due to arrive in London today for treatment at the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, following their illegal arrest last month by military police.

Mark Chavunduke, aged 34, the editor of Zimbabwe's *Standard* newspaper, and Ray Choto, aged 37, the paper's chief reporter, were subject to electric shocks, beatings and repeated near suffocation after running a story about a failed plot to overthrow President Mugabe - **GDN page 12, C8** -

Sun 14

Programme notes, for - *Rebellion* - see **Zimbabwe Tape 6** - Described as "conceited" "vainglorious" and "humourless" the frankly disillusioned Ian Smith, then prime minister of Rhodesia, committed treason with his 1965 United Declaration of Independence.

In this three parter, D Dimpleby recounts those frustrating days when Smith fought Harold Wilso nand won, but not before herding the black nationalist leaders into

camps, where they were to moulder for 10 years. (One leader said the camps weren't fit for human habitation; Smith insisted they "lived like kings").
This chapter in history might have faded but the series grips as much as it infuriates.

APRIL

Fri 9

Headline - *Zimbabwe's hidden war costs* - after 8 months involvement in the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, President Mugabe will go to great lengths to stop the people of Zimbabwe learning the real costs - human and financial - of the governments involvement.

Unreported inside the country, in 3/99 in Eshimba in eastern Congo rebels inflicted heavy casualties - 80 - on the Zimbabwean army. 'Acceptable' in military terms, the Defence Minister is reported to have told the **Financial Gazette**, though a loss as great as this would seem to be great in political terms, if the cases of journalists Choto and Chavunduka (qv) are so.

Financially, a loan from the International Monetary fund, of £33m [\$53m], has been postponed because the Board does not agree that most of the war's costs are being paid by the Congolese.

Rumours, via the **Financial Gazette** abound that the Harare government is prepared to purchase 10 Hindi M24 helicopters from Russia. These will cost \$27m. There is already Zimbabwean Airforce pilots and engineers in Russia, learning the practicalities of flying and maintaining these airborne gunships.

Mon 12

Headline - *Mugabe Breaks with IMF* - President Robert Mugabe announced yesterday that Zimbabwe was severing connections with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, a move likely to intensify his economic troubles.

The IMF have repeatedly refused to sanction a £33 million balance of payments loan because of concerns about the true cost of Zimbabwe's involvement in the Congo conflict, the Mugabe governments plans for land redistribution and alleged shaky deals in the energy sector.

Almost £500 million in financial assistance from Western donors was also hanging on the IMF decision and is now likely to be frozen. - **GDN page 12, C4** -

Tues 13

Headline, *Zimbabwe denies IMF split* - The financial minister of Zimbabwe, H Murerwa, yesterday denied reports that the government had cut off relations with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund because of repeated delays in negotiations for a £33 million loan.

In a report in the *Herald* newspaper Mr Murerwa denied a claim by the industry minister, N Shamuyarira, that Zimbabwe would go it alone and said that talks were continuing. The Zimbabwean involvement in the Congo conflict, land redistribution plans and corruption. - *GDN page 12 C5* -

Mon 19

Headline, *Mugabe admits crisis* - More than 1,200 Zimbabweans are dying each week from Aids, President Robert Mugabe said yesterday, acknowledging the size of the epidemic.

In a speech, marking the anniversary 19 years of formal independence, Mr Mugabe blamed the epidemic “for reversing the gains which the country has made since independence.”

Last year officials denied claims that 700 were dying each week of Aids but later admitted that 20% of the 12.7m population were infected with Aids or HIV. - *AP* -

MAY

Thurs 20

Headline, *Zimbabwe court decides women are junior males* - The majority of the countries women - the 80% who go into a traditional marriage, where the husband is allowed to enter into a polygamy based relationship - have lost their right to inherit property as the elder sibling in a relationship. The Supreme Court in Harare has ruled that all property rights should go to the male, even if he is younger than the wife.

“We are determined to see that women have access to justice in Zimbabwe,” says L Zigomo, director of the Zimbabwe Women Layers Association. - *GDN, page 17 C3*

JUNE

Fri 11

Headline, *Rights reports scathing on Zimbabwe’s government* - The **Zimbabwe Independent** has highlighted a report from the Human Rights grouping “**Africa Watch**” that calls on the government of Robert Mugabe to write a new constitution for the country. Of the governments own commission that is hearing evidence throughout the country the report says that there are only “half measures.” It is dominated by members of the ruling Zanu PF party. - *GDN, page 17 C 1* -

JULY

Fri 2

Headline - “*African Giant*” *Nkomo dies aged 82* - the long serving African nationalist Joshua Nkomo, has died at the age of 82., Quoted President Mugabe “He

was a giant in our nations history.” More simply - “the big father of Zimbabwe has gone,” according to R Magwaba, a Harare nursery school teacher.

In Bulawayo, Zimbabwe’ s second city and the heartland of the Ndbele nation and from which the former Deputy President gained his most loyal support.

With this death “we wait for the others [nationalist leaders who fought for independence from the British] to go” continued R Magwaba. as though she expected, hoped for? an uprising that will unseat the governing party led by R Mugabe.

His body will lie in state in the capital, before a state funeral on 4/7. - **A M GDN page 16 C8 -**

Headline - *Aids is killing 240 people a day in Zimbabwe - and they can't cope* - in an interview with G Tembo, the United Nations Aids advisor, by **Radio Netherlands** on its *Newsline programme* on 23/6 and rebroadcast via the Internet and Cable on the Astra satellite - the point was made that so intense has the HIV virus got a hold on the Zimbabwean society that the morgues are having to stay open around the clock just so that relatives of the dead can collect their loved ones.- **The Editor, page 16 -**

Tues 6

Headline, -*Nkomo given hero's burial* - with President Mugabe acting as chief praise singer‘ Father Zimbabwe, vice president was buried in Hero’s Acre watched by a crowd of 30,000.

The president claimed that just because the vice president was dead Matabeleland will not be neglected “it will be treated as it was when Mr Nkomo was alive.” Words that instil fear into one fifth of the population - who are of the Ndbele tribe.

Unrelated to the death of the freedom fighter there was a rebirth of his Zapu Party, 12 years after it was swallowed up by the government’s Zanu (PF), in order to bring peace to Matabeleland and an end to army occupation in the mid 80’s.

The New Zanu. unlike the old party is run by men in their 30’s. Their aim is to install a federal government in Harare which will allow more autonomy to the regions . It is also calling for an end to the involvement in the civil war in the Congo. At the present time there is no ‘notable’ leader. A name D Dabengwa - Zanu military commander during the civil war is the most likely contender.

The worry, this close to the 3/2001 election, to the present government is if New Zanu and the other parties of liberals join forces - they will pose a potent challenge to Mr Mugabe’s Zapu (PF) government. **GDN page 16, C 7**

SEPTEMBER

Fri 2

Headline – *Mugabe voter roll ‘a Shambles* – A coalition of Zimbabwean opposition parties and human rights groups is to go to court to press President Robert Mugabe’s government to compile a new, more accurate, voters roll for the general election scheduled for next March.

Calling the current roll ‘a shambles’, Pricilla Mishhairabwi – Mushongo, of the Foundation For Democracy in Zimbabwe [Fodezi] said “in some cases up to eight people with identical names are registered at the same address. – *A Meldrum, Harare GDN, page 15, C 1* –

Tues 7

Headline – *New party takes on Mugabe* – Zimbabwe’s powerful trade union movement announced yesterday that it is to launch a new political party, the Movement for Democratic Change, to challenge Robert Mugabe’s stranglehold on power.

The new party will pose a serious threat to President Mugabe’s Zanu – PF party in parliamentary elections set for March 2000. – *A M GDN page C7*

Fri 24

Advert, *Zimbabwe The New Democratic Constitution – Constitutional Issues and Questions* – a number of debating points that were finalised by the Constitutional Commission’s Thematic Committee, that was in session from 18 – 29/7 *see also www.zimconstitution.org*. zw. GDN 16 –18 inc –

OCTOBER

Thurs 7

Headline, *Loan halted to Zimbabwe* – The World Bank suspended a \$140m [87m pounds] loan to Zimbabwe yesterday after reports that President Robert Mugabe’s government had lied about how much money was being spent on the war in the Congo.

The IMF had also ordered an audit as it decides whether to suspend a \$193m loan – *GDN, page 17, C4* –

Tues 19

Headline, *Mugabe offer to atrocity victims* – For the first time President Robert Mugabe has offered compensation to the minority Ndebele people for atrocities by the Zimbabwean army’s Fifth Brigade, which killed 200,000 civilians in rural

Matabeleland in 1982 – 1987. Mr Mugabe is trying to win support in the area. – **GDN, page 12, C 5**
Sun 31

Headline *Tatchell Arrested* – Peter Tatchell, the gay rights campaigner, was in police custody last night after attempting a citizen's arrest of Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe, for the alleged torture of two journalists. – **IOS, page 10, C 1** –

NOVEMBER

Mon 1

An undocumented strike by the 400 junior doctors – *unreported by the author* – which began at the end of 9/99, has now spread to the senior doctor level. This leaves patients in the tender care of only the consultants and the increasingly overworked nurses. The salaries paid to a junior doctor are Z\$ 15,000 per month.

Their demands for higher pay and better working conditions are unlikely to be addressed by the government as the health service – once, in the 1980's, the envy of Africa – is of a low priority in the scheme of things in Zimbabwe. In the last month the health budget, for the year 2000 has been placed before parliament. The ministry has requested Z\$10bn and was allocated only Z\$6bn. In contrast the defence budget was set at Z\$9bn.

Fortune days ago president Mugabe promised the doctors that their wages would be doubled in the year 2000. However no written guarantee was given. – **GDN, page 16, C 1-**

Mon 8

Headline, *Mugabe accuses Blair's 'gay gang'* – back home in Zimbabwe, following the unfortunate incident (qv 31/10), the president told the *Sunday Mail* in Harare that the British Prime Minister was using 'gangster tactics' to humiliate him whenever he passed through London.

He felt that the demonstrations were being the governments tacit approval as the authorities in London did not approve of the authorities, in Harare, planning to seize farmland owned by whites.

A spokesman of the gay rights group Outrage said that Zimbabwe was using the spectre of homosexuality to mask the government's inefficient economic policy. London authorities dismissed the summoning of the High Commissioner to explain the action of the government – no special requests were made as Mr Mugabe was on a private visit. – **GDN, page 2, C 7** –

Sat 13

Headline – *Mugabe attacks Blair as crisis with Zimbabwe deepens with Aids row* – Attending the Commonwealth Conference, in Durban, both heads of government have

clashed over festering issues of the treatment of the Zimbabwean leader on his recent private visit to London (qv). The British prime minister has, in the meantime complained that African countries, and Zimbabwe in particular, have not done enough to control the spread of the Aids virus in his country. – **GDN, page 6, C 1-**

Tues 16

President Mugabe's brother in law, R Marufu, has been recalled to Harare from Zimbabwe's high commission in Ottawa, escaping prosecution for alleged assaulting his daughter in law, the *Daily News* reported yesterday.

Mr Marufu was accused of assaulting his daughter, 14, on October 5. A Zimbabwean foreign service official said that Marufu had only slapped her. – **AP –**

Wed 17

Headline – *Tatchell charged over Mugabe* – Peter Tatchell, the gay rights campaigner, who spent time in police custody (qv 31/10) is to be taken to court for his actions on this date. During his attempt to make a citizens arrest on President Mugabe it is alleged that acts of threatening behaviour were used. Also he will be charged with assaulting a police officer. – **GDN, page 2 C 5 –**

DECEMBER

Sat 11

Headline, *CPS drop Tatchell charges*, following the arrest of Peter Tatchell (qv 17/11) the Crown Prosecution service have dropped all charges against the gay rights activist.

Mr Tatchell had been charged with using threatening words and behaviour and assaulting a police officer. Speaking after a hearing at Horsferry Road Magistrates court, where the authority said that there was insufficient evidence to support the charges, he said that he felt vindicated at the use of the citizen's arrest of the Zimbabwean president. – **GDN, page 16, C 8 –**

Headline, *Marchers to defy Mugabe*, Campaigners against President Robert Mugabe's proposed constitution vowed to proceed with protests in Zimbabwe today, despite the government ban on marches.

The plan would give Mr Mugabe sweeping new powers and allow him to run for two more terms. – **GDN, page 21, C 7 –**

Sun 12

Headline, *Demonstrators Gassed*, Zimbabwean police tear-gassed 700 demonstrators demanding democratic reforms, in defiance of a ban on the march. Lawyers and academics scattered in terror as paramilitary riot squads attacked them without warning in a suburb of the capital, Harare. – **IOS, page 4, C 8 –**

Mon 20

Headline, *Mugabe to take whites' land*, Zimbabwe president, Robert Mugabe, has vowed to seize land from white people – and not pay them for it, as his government has previously promised.

Mr Mugabe said that Zimbabwe's 12.5m black people could not achieve economic goals while 60,000 whites controlled land and the business world. – **AP** -